Mrs George Cath. No 10

REDEEM THE TIME.

BY THE

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KELSO.

"REDEEMING THE TIME, BECAUSE THE DAYS ARE EVIL."
EPH. V. 16.

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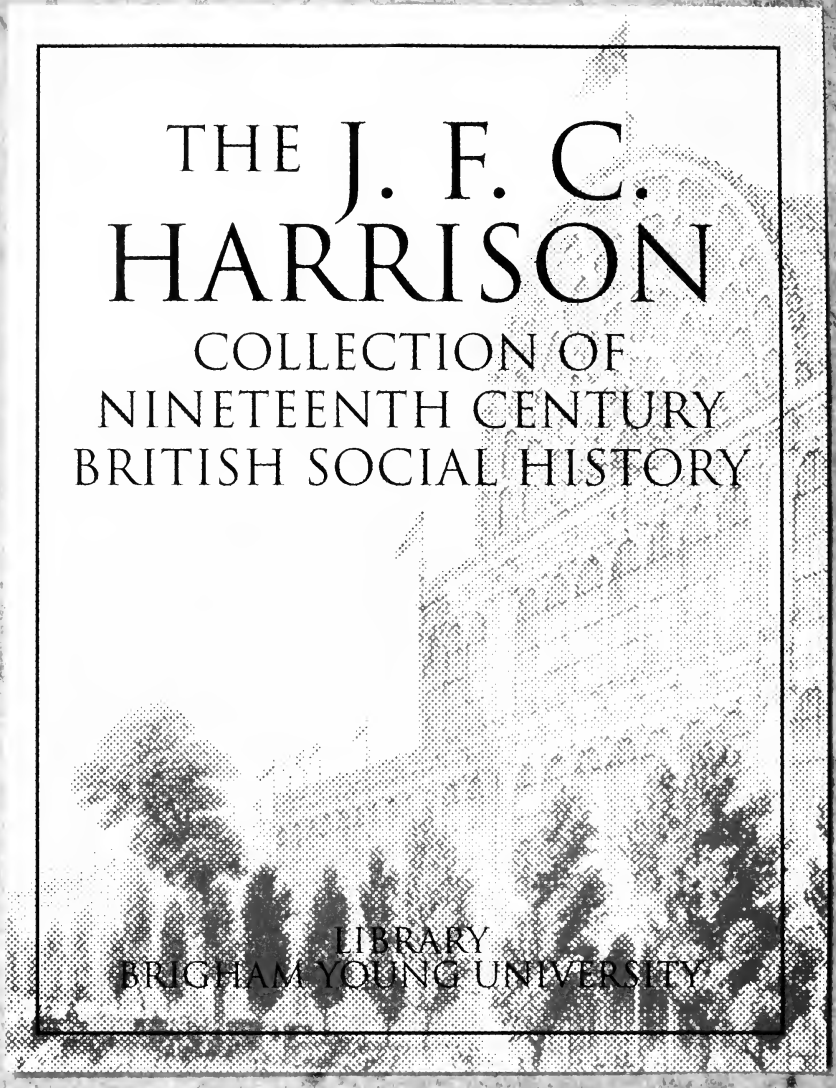

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REDEEM THE TIME.

"*Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*"—EPH. v. 16.

THE startling words of the 14th verse must be linked with these of the 16th. It is expected of one who is "awake" and has "risen," that he should redeem the time. *Sleepers* may waste it, *he* must redeem it. Can we be awake, and yet not "redeem the time?"

The apostle's word here is a very strong one. It is the strongest of all the words that signify to "redeem," and is only used four times in the New Testament, Gal. iii. 13; iv. 5; Col. iv. 5; Eph. v. 16. It does not mean simply to buy, but to "buy out of," or to "buy up from;" as when Christ is said to have "bought us out from the curse of the law," buying *out* those who were fast held by that curse. The expression, "redeeming the time," corresponds exactly to that used in Dan. ii. 8, "I know of certainty, that ye would gain (buy up) the time."

Looking at the word, then, in this sense, let us call solemn attention to this redemption, this buying up of time. "I am large about redeeming time," said Richard Baxter, "because therein the sum of a holy, obedient life is included."

It was an ancient custom to put an hour-glass into the coffin, as an emblem of time run out. "I stopped," says a writer of the last century, "in Clerkenwell churchyard to see a grave-digger at work. He had dug pretty deep, and was

come to a coffin which was quite rotten. In clearing away the rotten pieces of wood, the grave-digger found *an hour-glass* close to the left side of the skull, with sand in it, the wood of which was so rotten, that it broke when he took hold of it." A strange custom this! To notify to the *dead* that their time was at an end! Of what profit could such a warning be, coming thus too late! It is to the *living* that we would present the hour-glass! It is the *living* that we would warn of the swift rush of time. Moments and years, —moments and years! With what speed do they hurry away! O time, time, time, how soon will it be done! Men and brethren, look at that hour-glass, emptying itself, grain by grain, with such unstaying eagerness. Living men, you will soon be with the dead, or the last trumpet will be sounding, and where will you be, and what is your hope?

But look at the apostle's words, "redeem the time."

1. Buy it out of the hands of those who are casting it away. Time, like a wide, fair garden of flowers, spreads out before the children of men; but they trample down its flowers. Time, like a vast treasure-house, opens its stores of gold and silver; but they fling them away. Buy them up! Lose nothing! Wasted time stands at the very head of the world's long catalogue of sins. Be warned! Men waste time; do you use it! They fling it away; gather it up. Whatever those that are asleep may do, those whom the apostle calls "fools," (verse 15,) it becomes you who profess to be awake, to use it well. REDEEM THE TIME!

2. Buy it up so as to lose not a moment. As the reaper with his sickle carefully cuts down, and binds up the corn of autumn; so do you with time! As the gleaner follows the reaper, picking up each scattered ear of grain; so do you glean up each moment of time! For each one is precious, too precious to be lost, or slept away, or laughed away, or danced away, or sported away, or talked away, or idled away! Gather up the very smallest fragment, that nothing may be lost, for each lost moment tells upon eternity

So many moments lost on earth, so many moments lost for heaven, and lost for ever! REDEEM THE TIME!

3. Buy it up so as to lay hold of each *opportunity* as it turns up, for the word "time" refers as much to "opportunity," as to time itself. Be on the eager watch for opportunities. Allow none to slip from you. Seize upon each one. Improve them all! It has been said that there is "a tide in the affairs of men," which must be taken at its height, or else all is lost. But in truth there is not one tide merely, but many. There may, in one sense and for certain things, be but one tide, but in another view there are tides not a few. Each day, each hour, has its tides, its critical moments, its opportunities, its seasons, which must be seized on at the moment, or lost for ever. Might we not endeavour, each morning, to forecast a little, and consider what opportunities may lie before us, and be ready to seize each one as it passes; for it passes us as the rushing river, it passes us as the swift bird, it passes us as the winged lightning. Be ready to lay hold on it. REDEEM THE TIME!

4. Buy it up so as to have all in readiness against the evil day. As Joseph bought up the corn in the land of Egypt, as generals draw together all manner of stores into some city or fortress, against the day of war and siege; so do you. The evil day is at hand, nay, it has already begun. There is not a moment to be lost. Make ready for the worst. Remember that preparation for an evil day consists much in redeeming time. If this be neglected, then that day will not only come upon you unawares, but it will come as the avenger of your wasted hours. REDEEM THE TIME!

5. Buy it up so as to make rapid progress in your heavenward journey. On this, there must be no loiterings. You cannot afford to linger. Time is too brief, the way is too rugged, the journey is too important, the risk of failure is too terrible, the reward is too bright and glorious, to allow any such lingering. Press onwards. Make sure that you are really advancing. See that you are becoming holier in

your spirit, heavenlier in your walk, and more like the Master in your whole character and deportment. Pray more, love more, trust more. Be more self-denied and unworldly. Mortify your members which are upon the earth; crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. REDEEM THE TIME!

6. Buy it up so as to be more useful in the world. It is not a life of fame and greatness that you are called to, but to one of usefulness. You may not be able to do or to speak great things, but you can be *useful*. See that you keep this in view. Oh pray to be kept from an unprofitable, wasted life. Pray for a *useful* life, however humble, nay, despised and obscure. Let your aim, each morning as you rise, be to spend a *useful* day. REDEEM THE TIME!

7. Buy it up so that, by means of it, you may be laying up treasure in heaven. Wasted time is gold irrecoverably thrown away—cast into the fathomless ocean, from which it can never be brought up. Wasted time is not merely lost for a lifetime, but lost for eternity. Each lost hour tells upon eternity, and makes you *poorer for ever*. It robs you of everlasting treasure. For, time redeemed is treasure laid up in heaven. Time redeemed is treasure multiplied a thousand-fold to us, so that when we reach the kingdom, we not merely find all our treasure that we had, there before us, but we find it increased and magnified far beyond what we could have conceived. Time lost on earth is blessedness lessened in heaven. Time lost is glory lost; but time redeemed is so much glory gained. Time lost will place us lower in the kingdom (supposing that we do enter it), give us a dimmer crown, a poorer inheritance, a narrower range of dominion; but time redeemed will place us higher in the kingdom, will add brightness to our crown, and extend the limits and the glory of our incorruptible inheritance—the inheritance of the saints in light. Oh, is it not then worth our while to lay these things to heart—to consider how much we gain for eternity by buying up our moments here. REDEEM THE TIME!

We waste our time in many ways: in sloth, or sleep, or idleness, or ill-regulated hours and employment; in frivolous amusements, unprofitable books, reading that does nothing for the soul; in incessant visiting, going from house to house, instead of being keepers at home, or workers for God; vain conversation, gossiping, foolish talking, and jesting. In all these ways we fling away our precious hours—"killing time," as it is fashionable to call it, forgetting that the killing of time is the murdering of eternity. Oh, is it wise thus to waste our brief life here? Is it like reasonable beings thus to cast aside as useless one of God's best gifts, sent us in love, to enable us to prepare for his kingdom?

Think how strong and many are the reasons for redeeming time. We have but one life—shall we waste it? Had we *many*, we might do so with less of folly and guilt; but we have only one!—one lifetime!—one measured circle of days and hours, beyond which not an hour or day is ours! And then our time is so short;—a few years, that a child may count up, and then all is over!—a span, a handbreadth, a vapour, a shadow, a tale that is told! Such is man's brief life.

In this brief life there is a great work to do. Each one has his own work, and no one is left without something to do for God. This great work is to *fill up* our span! It is something which cannot be trifled with or thrust into a corner, or done by fits and starts; it is something to be gone about solemnly and steadily, as realizing what our time was given for.

And there are many hindrances! Each day flings them across our path, or fastens them upon us to drag us backward! Temptations, enemies, allurements, self-indulgence, stumbling-blocks, snares of every kind and name,—all to hinder us, to slacken our hands, or retard our speed, or lead us to take our ease, or tempt us to despair! More than ever now in these last days, for they are evil, nay, getting worse and worse—enemies multiplying, hindrances increasing, darkness deepening;—yes, the days are evil! Oh

let us bestir ourselves, and be in earnest. Let us REDEEM THE TIME!

Are you saved already, reader, by having, in believing, become one with the mighty Saviour? Then press on with all your might! Seek to be holy, to get quit of sin, to live separate from the world, to grow in grace, to mortify your members which are upon the earth, to have your eye upon the coming kingdom with its glorious King. Seek to save others. Go not to heaven alone. Watch, and pray, and labour for the souls of the unsaved.

Are you yet among the unsaved? Then lose no time. Yonder is the hiding-place; it is not far off, and it is open and free. It has sheltered thousands already, and why should not you too enjoy that shelter? Many voices bid you welcome! The voice of a Saviour's love above, and the voice of those who learned to love that Saviour here. Each passing hour, each setting sun, each closing year,—these bid you welcome, and urge you to delay no more! Oh, come and taste and see that the Lord is good! For it is but receiving this goodness of his, giving credit to the tidings of freedom which the cross has made known, and the line is crossed which separates you from the kingdom. Oh, sinner, will you not step across that line and be saved?

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